

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3878

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 17504

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO, MBFR, GW

SUBJECT: MBFR: INCREASED FRG PRESS COMMENTARY ON THE
NEGOTIATIONS

1. WILLY BRANDT'S REMARKS IN LONDON ON OCTOBER 6 HAVE
TRIGGERED A NUMBER OF FOLLOW-UP ARTICLES AND EDITORIALS
IN THE FRG ON THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS. THE MOST RECENT
EDITORIAL APPEARED IN THE OCTOBER 23 EDITION OF THE
"FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE." IT WAS WRITTEN BY GUENTHER
GILLESSEN UNDER THE TITLE "THE BUNDESWEHR IS MEANT."
OUR WORKING LEVEL CONTACTS CLAIM THAT GILLESSEN REACHED
HIS CONCLUSIONS INDEPENDENTLY. HOWEVER, SINCE THEY
REFLECT WHAT WE HAVE BEEN HEARING OFFICIALLY AND ARE
CARRIED IN ONE OF THE FRG'S MOST INFLUENTIAL NEWSPAPERS,
WE REPORT THEM TO ILLUSTRATE THE PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF
MBFR ISSUES IN THE FRG.

2. IN THE FIRST SECTION OF THE EDITORIAL GILLESSEN
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REVIEWS THE NEGOTIATIONS UP TO THIS POINT, NOTING THAT

THE WEST WANTED TO KEEP NUCLEAR WEAPONS OUT OF THE TALKS. HE THEN REFERS TO THE RUMOR THAT THE WEST WILL OFFER TO INCLUDE SUCH WEAPONS. FINALLY, HE MAKES REFERENCE TO THE POSSIBILITY OF AMERICAN TACNUC REDUCTIONS FROM 7,000 TO 1,000 THEREBY DEVALUING ANY NUCLEAR OFFER IN MBFR.

3. GILLESSEN THEN CONTINUES AS FOLLOWS:

"BEFORE PROPOSING REDUCTION OF U.S. NUCLEAR WAR-HEADS IN EUROPE IN RETURN FOR REDUCTION OF SOVIET TANK FORCES, THE WEST WILL HAVE TO MAKE CLEAR THAT IT ADHERES TO ITS MBFR CONCEPT AND IS NOT READY TO CONVERT MBFR INTO NUCLEAR ARMS DISCUSSIONS. MOREOVER, THE WEST WOULD HAVE TO FIND OUT FIRST WHETHER MOSCOW IS READY TO ACCEPT THE PRINCIPLE OF ESTABLISHING A COMMON CEILING FOR CONVENTIONAL FORCES ON BOTH SIDES."

"IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE WHY THE SOVIET UNION WILL SURRENDER THE ADVANTAGE OF ITS SUPERIORITY IN THE CONVENTIONAL AREA. INDICATIONS ARE THAT THE SOVIETS ARE NOT DIRECTLY INTERESTED IN FORCE REDUCTIONS BUT IN CONVERTING MBFR INTO AN INSTRUMENT OF SUBJECTING PART OF THE NATO FORCES AND PART OF THE NATO AREA TO INTERNATIONAL CONTROL TO OBTAIN A VOICE ON WESTERN MILITARY MATTERS, ESPECIALLY ON MATTERS CONCERNING THE BUNDESWEHR. SOVIET EFFORTS SEEM TO BE AIMED AT SEPARATING THE BUNDESWEHR FROM OTHER WESTERN DEFENSE FORCES BY MEANS OF ESTABLISHING AN AREA OF INTERNATIONAL CONTROL AS ENVISAGED BY THE RAPACKI AND THE GOMULKA PLANS.

"IF THIS CONSIDERATION IS CORRECT, THE MBFR PRINCIPLE OF EQUALITY WILL NOT THEREBY BECOME BASICALLY MORE INTERESTING FOR THE SOVIET UNION THAN THE AMERICANS OFFER THE WITHDRAWAL OF A SEVENTH OF THEIR ATOMIC WEAPONS. THIS WOULD ONLY HAPPEN IF NATO WERE PREPARED TO GIVE UP THE PRINCIPLE OF ALLIANCE COMMON CEILINGS IN FAVOR OF A NEGOTIATION OVER NATIONAL CEILINGS. FOR A LONG TIME THE STRENGTH OF THE BUNDESWEHR AND OF THE DEFENSE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE OTHER WESTERN ALLIES HAS BEEN STRICTLY AN INTERNAL AFFAIR OF THE NATO COUNTRIES. A CHANCE THAT THIS MIGHT CHANGE AND THE SOVIETS WERE

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ABLE TO SUPERVISE THE BUNDESWEHR - AFTER THE AMERICANS THE MOST IMPORTANT ARMY IN EUROPE - WOULD PRESUMABLY MAKE MBFR ATTRACTIVE FOR THE SOVIET UNION AND WORTH SOVIET TROOP REDUCTIONS. THE FIRMNESS OF THE WEST IN VIENNA, THEREFORE, WILL BE PARTICULARLY PUT TO THE TEST ON THIS ISSUE."

HILLENBRAND

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